NEWS TODAY

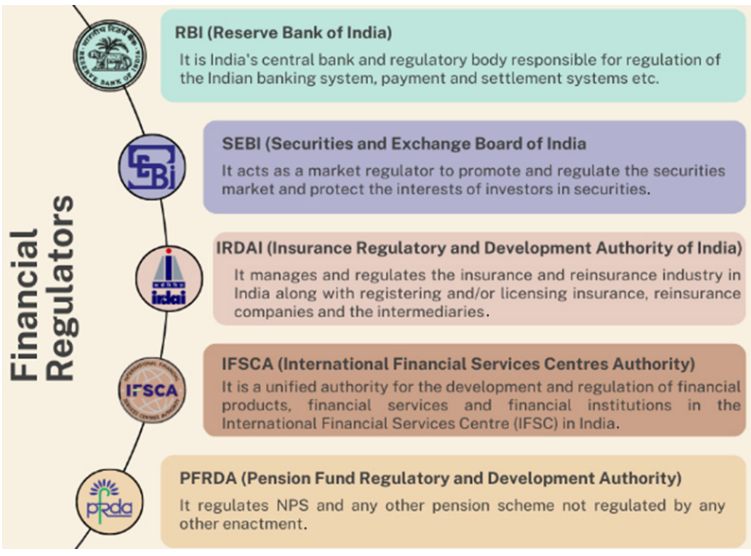
LIVING PLANET REPORT 2022 RELEASED BY WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE (WWF)

- The report, **released every two years,** measures **how species are responding to pressure in the environment** due to biodiversity loss and climate change.
- **Title:** Building A Nature-Positive Society
- **Key findings**
  - **69% decline in the wildlife populations of mammals,** birds, amphibians, reptiles, and fish, **across the globe in the last 50 years.**
  - **Highest decline** was in Latin America and the Caribbean region.
  - **Freshwater populations have declined the most,** with an average 83% decline between 1970 and 2018.
  - **About 50% of warm water corals** have already been lost and warming of 1.5 degrees **celsius** will lead to a loss of **70-90% of warm water corals.**
- **Suggestions**
  - Report mentions **Trade, Development and Environment Hub (TRADE Hub),** a multi-country, interdisciplinary collaboration that seeks to understand **international trade systems and their social and environmental impacts.**
  - Calls for **diversification in food production,** particularly across cropping and animal systems.
  - Highlights urgent **need to address the sustainability of natural resource supply chains,** given the impact they have on nature and people.
  - Suggests to **adopt a cross-sectoral, integrated approach,** to promote **solutions with co-benefits** and **avoid solutions with trade-offs** between biodiversity, climate and other SDGs.

- Report also provides **Living Planet Index (LPI).**
  - LPI is measure of state of **world's biological diversity based on population trends** of vertebrate species from **terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats.**
  - LPI has been **adopted by the Convention of Biological Diversity** as an indicator of progress towards its 2011-2020 targets and can play an **important role in monitoring progress towards the post-2020 goals.**
- WWF is an **international non-governmental organization** founded in 1961, headquartered in **Gland, Switzerland.**

RBI ANNOUNCES STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR INTER-OPERABLE REGULATORY SANDBOX (IoRS)

- The SOP is prepared by the **inter-regulatory technical group** (IRTG) **on fintech,** chaired by RBI's fintech department and representatives of SEBI, IRDAI, IFSCA, PFRDA and the central government.
  - It provides a framework **to regulate newer fintech products and services** falling in the ambit of more than one financial regulator (see image).
- IoRS is 'a mechanism to facilitate **testing of innovative hybrid financial products / services** falling within the regulatory ambit of more than one financial sector regulator'.
- **Key highlights of the framework**
  - **The dominant feature** of the product will **determine influence of the regulator** and regulator under whose jurisdiction such feature will be principal regulator (PR) and others will be associate regulators (AR).
  - The dominant position will be decided in two ways:
    - type of enhancement to the existing products like loans, deposits, etc.,
    - number of **relaxations sought by the entity for undertaking** the test under IoRS.
  - **International Financial Services Centres Authority** will be PR for Indian FinTechs having global ambition and foreign FinTechs seeking entry to India.
  - **IRTG on FinTech** will resolve any coordination issue between PR and AR etc.



NGT IMPOSED FINE ON DELHI GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO MANAGE WASTE AT LANDFILL SITES

- **Around 80% of the legacy waste** at the three landfill sites — Ghazipur, Bhalswa, and Okhla — was not remedied in Delhi.
  - **Solid Waste Management Rules 2016,** under Environment Protection Act 1986, state that **only non-recyclable, non-biodegradable** and non-combustible waste should go to a sanitary landfill.
- As per **CPCB, in 2020-21,**
  - Total **quantity of Solid waste generated in the country is 1.6 lakh tonnes per day,** of which 1.5 lakh tonne per day is collected at a **collection efficiency of 95.4%.**
  - **50 % of waste is treated** and 18.4% is landfilled.
- **Challenges in handling Solid waste in India**
  - **Lack of Funding** to address the MSW problem.
  - **Poor Implementation** of rules and regulations.
  - **Segregation is not done** at source and unorganised segregation facilities.
  - Lack of **trained manpower.**
- **Harmful Effects of improper treatment of solid waste**
  - Toxic gases are emitted from landfills, such as **methane, which can start fire.**
  - Increases in the **risk of severe health implications** such as birth defects, low birth weight, and in adjoining areas.
  - Leaching of **harmful chemicals into the ground and water supply.**

REMEDIAL METHODS OF TREATMENT OF SOLID WASTE

- **Incineration** involves the **combustion of organic materials** into bottom ash, flue gases, particulates, and heat that can be used to generate electricity.
- **Gasification:** process that c**onverts organic or fossil-based carbonaceous materials** at high temperatures (>700°C), **without combustion,** with a controlled amount of oxygen and/or steams into carbon monoxide, hydrogen, and carbon dioxide.
- **Pyrolysis:** in which waste/material is **exposed to high temperature, and in the absence of oxygen.**

INDIA BEARS WORLD'S HIGHEST HEALTH, ECONOMIC BURDEN DUE TO LEAD POISONING: REPORT

- The report about lead poisoning was prepared **jointly by government think tank Niti Aayog and Council of Scientific & Industrial Research.**
  - Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh had the **highest average blood lead levels.**

Steps required

- Enforce legislation regulating **E-waste recycling and proper formal recycling.**
- Policies to **exclude the use of Pb** in gasoline and paint, ceramic potteries, cosmetics, and medicines.
- Pb parameters are to be included in **national drinking water quality standards.**
- **Targeted research and intervention study** with scientific management, treatment and remediation of Pb.

- **Sources of lead**
  - Lead (Pb) is a **naturally occurring toxic metal** found in the Earth's crust. Other sources include:
  - **Mining, smelting and refining industries** as primary contributors while unorganized sectors (e.g. scrap dealers) as **secondary contributors.**
  - **Household Products** such as **Cosmetic Products, Ayurveda medicines** etc.
  - Lead present in **printed circuit boards and batteries** due to unscientific recycling
  - **Potteries** (e.g. utensils and glazed ceramic wares), **water bodies** etc.
- **Health Impacts of Lead**
  - Small exposure leads to symptoms like **headaches, nausea, irritability, tiredness and stomach ache.**
  - Large exposure **affects brain development,** especially in children and lowers IQ.
  - Lead exposure makes the **body susceptible to anaemia** as it prevents formation of haemoglobin.
  - **Premature birth;** reduced birth weight and slow growth **in newly-borns.**

CABINET APPROVES NEW SCHEME PM-DEVINE

- Union Cabinet has approved **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)** for the coming four years of the 15th Finance Commission from 2022-23 to 2025-26.
  - It is a **Central Sector Scheme** with 100% Central funding.
  - Implemented by: **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).**
- **Objectives**
  - **Fund infrastructure** convergently, in the spirit of **PM Gati Shakti;**
  - **Support social development projects** based on felt needs of the NER;
  - **Enable livelihood activities** for youth and women;
  - **Fill the development gaps** in various sectors.
- **Significance of PM DevINE**
  - **Funding for projects in infrastructure,** healthcare, agriculture and livelihood would help **improve the standard of living** of people.
  - **State-specific projects such as** bamboo link road in Mizoram, for the transport of bamboo from forests would help bamboo growers.
  - Would **complement the existing schemes** in the region.

Other Initiatives for NER

- **North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme,** to improve NER's infrastructure cover projects relating to **connectivity enhancing tourism** and supply of water and power etc.
- **North East Venture Fund,** first and only dedicated venture fund for NER, aims to promote business growth and skill development.
- **Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North East.**

INDIAN STUDENTS ABROAD MOST LIKELY TO STAY BACK IN DEVELOPED NATIONS: REPORT

- Report titled **'International Migration Outlook 2022', released by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development,** found that:
  - Students from **China (22 per cent) and India (10 per cent)** account for the largest share of foreign students in OECD countries.
  - Indian students tend to have a **higher stay rate than the overall international student population. E.g.,** Among students admitted in 2015, 71% of Indians held work permits in Canada by 2020 while the relative figure for China was 18%.
- **Reasons for this trend**

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Higher taxes, lower quality of life, poor healthcare system, outdated education system, etc.	Better investment opportunities, wealth preservation, a better lifestyle, a safer society, gender equality, and a better ecosystem for businesses and start-ups.

- **Impact on Home country**
  - **Positives:** Broaden domestic students' career and networking opportunities; Remittances; acts as human bridges for increased people-to-people ties, technical assistance etc.
  - **Negative: Money outflow and Brain Drain** leading to reduced domestic innovation potential; **slowing business growth** and national development.
- **Government measures to reverse the trend**
  - **Teachers Associateship for Research Excellence , National Post-Doctoral fellowship programme** etc. to engage and retain domestic talent.
  - **Brain Gain initiatives, like VAJRA Faculty Scheme** to harness the technical, economic and social capital of overseas Indians.

ALSO IN NEWS

National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS)

- Centre has asked states to set up a **local server for NGDRS.**
- NGDRS is a flagship program under **Ministry of Rural Development to digitalise the land record system** in country.
- It is a **web-based system** and deployed as a **state specific instance.**
- It **enables citizens to register land documents** with the **Registering Authority** online with online property valuation, authentication etc.
  - Prevent Fraudulent transactions and disputes; eSigning of Documents; etc.

India's Fibre Crops

- According to **National Statistical Office,** Gross Value of Output of India's fibre crops output **dipped during 2011-20 despite a hike in price support.**
  - It includes **raw cotton (94.5%** of output), **Jute (5.1%)** and **others.**
- **Other findings**
  - **Gujarat** remains the **leader** despite a **high decline** in **overall fibre output share** from **40.3%** in **2011-12** to **29.3%** in **2019-20.**
  - **West Bengal continues to dominate Jute output** with an **increase in its share from 84% to 88%;** followed by Bihar and Assam.

Indian Railways roll out policy on Electric Vehicles (EV)

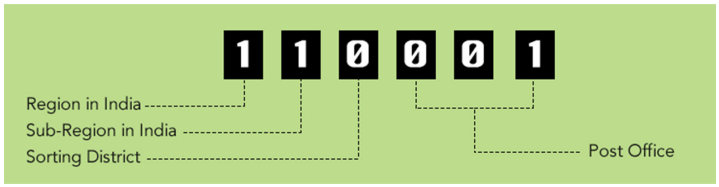
- **Key goals under it include:**
  - Railways would **replace 20% of its fleet with EVs by December 2023,** 60% by December 2024 and achieve **100% by the end of 2025.**
  - To **create vast charging infrastructure** at major railway stations, office buildings, parking lots etc.
  - Charging Point Operators would be invited to set-up **EV charging stations.**
- This will help railways achieve its target of **net zero carbon emission by 2030.**

Abidjan Convection

- Formally, Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the **Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West and Central Africa Region** came into force in 1984.
- It covers **marine environment, coastal zones and related inland waters** falling within **West and Central and Southern African Region.**
- Its mission is to **"Protect, Conserve and Develop the Abidjan Convention Area and its Resources for the Benefit and Well-being of its People."**

Postal Index Number or PIN Code

- Golden Jubilee of PIN Code was commemorated.
- PIN **(Postal Index Number)** Code, also known as **Zip Code or Area** Code, is the post office numbering code system used by India Post.



- It was **first introduced on August 15, 1972.**
- It is a **6 digits long code with each digit denoting a particular meaning** (see **image**).
- Overall, India is divided into 9 postal regions (zones) with the **first eight as geographical regions and ninth being Indian Army.**

Convergent evolution

- More than **300 sub-variants of omicron** highlight the **phenomenon called convergent evolution.**
- Convergent evolution refers to the **evolution in different lineages of structures** that are similar or 'analogous', but that cannot be attributed to the existence of a common ancestor;
- **Convergent evolution** occurs when **species occupy similar ecological** niches and adapt in similar ways in response to similar selective pressures.

India's first sanctuary for slender lorises notified

- Named **Kadavur Slender Loris Sanctuary,** it is in Tamilnadu.
  - ➢ It is declared under **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- **Slender Lorises are** arboreal in nature i.e., spend most of their life on trees.
- They are the **primates** that **cannot jump.**
- **Diet: Insectivorous** and feeds on toxic insects' time on plants and benefits farmers.
- **Habitat:** tropical scrub and deciduous forests native.
- **There are two types:**
  - ➢ **Grey Slender Loris: found only in South India and small parts of Sri Lanka.** (IUCN- Near Threatened)
  - ➢ **Red Slender Loris:** found **only in Sri Lanka. (IUCN-** Endangered)
- Protected under **Schedule 1** of WildLife Protection act 1972.

Places in News

- Israel and Lebanon have signed a maritime agreement to resolve a long-running maritime border dispute over Mediterranean waters.

Lebanon (Capital: Beirut)

- Lebanon is a mountainous nation located on **eastern coastline** of the **Mediterranean Sea.**
- **Political Boundaries:** It shares its borders with **Israel and Syria.**
- Shares Maritime Borders with Cyprus.
- **Geographical Features:**
  - ➢ **Highest Point: Qurnat** as **Sawda**
  - ➢ **Lowest Point: Mediterranean Sea**
  - ➢ **longest River: Litani River**

Israel (Capital: Jerusalem)

- Israel is a **Western Asian** country located on **eastern coastline** of the **Mediterranean Sea** and the **Northern coast** of the **Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba).**

  Political Boundaries: It shares its borders with **Lebanon, Syria Jordan, Egypt** and the **Palestinian territories (West Bank** and Gaza Strip).
  - ➢ It shares its **Maritime Borders** with **Cyprus.**
- **Geographical Features:**
  - ➢ **Highest Point: Mt. Meron**
  - ➢ **Lowest Point: Dead Sea**
- **Longest River: Jordan River**

Israel-Lebanon maritime border dispute